

Application No. 10/605,489
Docket No. 129284
Amendment dated February 22, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 22, 2004

REMARKS

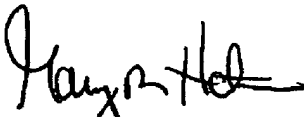
In the Office Action, the Examiner maintained rejections of independent claims 1 and 13 and their respective claims 3-12 and 17-20, but deemed claim 2 (which depends from claim 1) and claims 14-16 (which depend from claim 13) to recite allowable subject matter. In response, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of its dependent claim 2 (now canceled) and claim 13 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of its dependent claim 14 (now canceled). In addition, claims 3, 11, 15, and 16 have been amended for consistency with the amendments to their parent claims 1 and 13. As such, the amendments strictly comply with 37 CFR §1.116(a) as being limited to reducing and simplifying the issues remaining in the examination of Applicants' application - namely, placing remaining claims 1, 3-13, and 15-20 in condition for allowance. Consequently, the above amendment does not raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search by the Examiner, and places the claims in better condition for appeal.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that the claims define patentable novelty over all the references, alone or in combination, of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that this patent application be given favorable reconsideration.

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Should the Examiner have any questions with respect to any matter
now of record, Applicants' representative may be reached at (219) 462-4999.

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